

THE QUAKERS OF BALLAFAYLE.

by "Cushag".

Founded on the accounts in an old folio volume by Joseph Besse, entitled "Sufferings of the people called Quakers", and on a pamphlet by the late Dr. Thomas Hodgkin of the Society of Friends.

William Callow of Ballafayle.
Anne Callow, his wife.
Peter Cosnahan, fisherman.
Jane Hall and Old Nan, Quakers.
Mary Christen, servant to Mrs. Callow.
Bishop Barrow, Bishop and Governor.
Sumner, soldeirs, neighbours.

A period of years from 1657 to 1669.

Scene 1.

Farm kitchen at Ballafayle. Fire on the hearth; iron pot hanging from slowrey. A little group of men and women sitting in silence with hands folded. Mary Christen, tapping with impatient foot, gets up and goes to hearth, lifting pot another hitch up on slowrey.

JANE HALL: The Spirit is movin' me for to exhort thee, Mary Christen, for I see thou're middlin' lu'warm in thee worship.

MARY: Whist, woman, and don't be hindering me.

JANE HALL: Thee mind is set on worldly things, Mary.

MARY: It's like it is. There's plenty people in this world must be taken care of, seeing they're so took up with higher things that they'd be goin' a-starvin' if left to theirselves.

OLD NAN: How is the Mistress to-night, Mary een?

MARY: Well, not so bad only she's fretting a bit all day when Himself is away at Ramsa.

OLD NAN: Is the sister with her up?

MARY: Aye, Jane Christen have been here all day, for Evan went with the Master to see could they hear anything at all of poor Kate Evans.

PETER COS: Poor Kirry for all! To be roused out of her bed in the mids of the night and harried away by souldiers in steel armour.

JANE HALL: Qwhat's this thou're saying? I was taking notice there wasn' no smoke urrov her chimley a l day.

PETER COS: Harried away she was, the sowl, an she sleepin' peaceful under her own roof. For behoul' ye, in the mids of the dark night she was woke up with a big blaze of light - our wars seen it through the window ↗ an a souldier with a drawn sword in his hand standing by the side of the bed.

JANE HALL: Save us all!

PATER COS: An' the souldier put his hand on her and he said, "Get you up, Mistress, and come along of me" - And they took her with only an old blanket to keep the couth off her, and heised her on a cart they had there and away with them down to Port Lewaigue, and the poor sowl sobbing and moaning pirriful!

OLD WOMAN: Ogh hogh! Poor Kirry for all, that never done no harm to no person.

PETER COS: She was coming to maeting faithful, and that's all she done.

OLD NAN: Where in the world have they took her? Her that's never been out of her own house for a night. She'll die of the couth and the longing!

JANE HALL: (In a high voice) The heathen rage---

MARY: Don't be speaking so loud, Jane Hall. I don't want the Mistress woke up. It's like she'd be taking a lil slape while we were sitting quiet.

OLD NAN:(Leaning on stick) Lizzen though! It's like she'll wake now for I'm hearing Himself on the street.

(Enter William Callow)

CALLOW: Peace be on this house, friends.

MARY:(Going up to him) Save us all, Master, what's come to thee: thou're all covered in mire and dirt.

CALLOW: Well, well. We have gotten safe home for all, but there was some ill ones following us and heaving stones. Evan Christen got a cut on the head so he's gone home to have it seen to. Has Jane been here?

MARY: Aye, she have been most of the evening, but she went home a bit ago to put an air of fire in for Evan.

OLD NAN: Did thou hear about poor Kirry, Illiam?

CALLOW: I díd so, and we have been trying to find out where they have put her to, but they were close terrible. There was a fellow preach-ing on the Market Place got a sight of Evan and me, and of all the scandalous things he was saying about the Friends!

MARY: And did thou answer him, Master?

CALLOW: I did, Mary Christen. I said, "Friend, I am a man of peace but if thou say any more of thee lies I will take and wring thee neck

JANE HALL: Aw 'deed, thou're saying well. And qwhat did he do then?

CALLOW: He got behind some of the fisher-lads and sneaked up Strand Street way, but when we got outon Ballure Bridge there was a shower of stones out of the bushes.

PETER COS: Aw, lizzen though qwhat's doing on the dogs - they're growling terrible.

OLD PEOPLE: (Coming round Callow) Aw, mercy on us, it will be the soldiers!

MARY: Put out thm lights quick that they'll think we're gone to bed. Aw Master, for Heaven's sake don't go to the dhure.

CALLOW: Out of my road, Mary Christen. I have done no wrong that I should fear to speak with mine enemies in the gate.

OLD PEOPLE: Aw, spake them fair, Master Callow, or they'll have murder done on us!

(Callow opens door; steel caps of soldiers seen; two of them enter, one standing across doorway, the other taking hold of Callow.)

SOLDIER: We want you, William Callow, and these of your company.

CALLOW: What have thou against me that thou should come to my house in this unmannerly fashion?

SOLDIER: We come by order of the Earl of Derby to take you and these of your company.

CALLOW: The Earl of Derby's father never spoke ill of me or mine and I was a good tenant to him. It's like his son has been poisoned against me. Why would he harm me?

SOLDIER: Will you come or must we take you?

CALLOW: Will thou let me go up and leave good-bye with my wife that's sick with fever?

SOLDIER: You will not leave this room except to come with us. And these others the same.

CALLOW: Mary Christen, go you up and tell Herself, quait like, that I am just called away on a bit of business and will likely be back to-morrow.

MARY: (To soldiers) Are thee taking shame to theeself for doing such a trade? Coming in the houses and harrying the people with swoords - And the poor man just home from Ramsa and never had no supper even - I've a mind to heave this pot over thee!

CALLOW: That'll do, Mary gel. Go quait and do as I tell thee, that Herself will not be frighted.

(Soldiers marshall them through door, giving them in charge to those without, and then return.)

SOLDIER: Where's that wild cat he called Mary Christen?

MARY:(coming down the stairs) What do thou want with Mary Christen, that could knock the heads of thee together only for fear of disturbing the poow sowl up yandhar?

SOLDIER: You must come along of us.

MARY: Me come! And who's to see to the Mistress that's lying helpless?

SOLDIER: You've got to come, that's all.

MARY: I'll get me claws on thee before I do. Gerraway out of this with you and lave tormentin cul' women and sick persons that never hurted you.

(Soldiers throw a sack over her head and force her away fighting.)

CURTAIN.

Scene 2.

The dungeon under Peel Cathedral. William Callow and his companions, wild and hollow-eyed, in old rags of blankets and shawls, standing about or sitting on a rough plank bench. Enter Bishop attended by Sumner.

BISHOP: My poor people! I am truly grieved to see you in this sorrowful condition.

CALLOW: Natheless we bid thee welcome .

SUMNER:(Interrupting roughly) Put off your hat, fellow, when you speak to the Lord Bishop.

BISH OP: Nay, vex him not, Master Sumner. I would ask you to leave me here a space with these forlorn wanderers. (Exit Sumner)

CALLOW:(Continuing, and remaining covered) I bid thee welcome, Isaac Barrow. We bear thee no ill-will, but I would ask thee what thou have to say to us.

OLD NAN:(Excitedly, coming up to Bishop) Are thou the Saggirt, Master

BISHOP: What does she say?

OLD NAN: Will thou hear my lil piece, Sir? I can say it nice now. (Makes a child's curtsey and begins:-)

"She'n Chiarn my vochilley: shen-y-fa cha bee'm fere nhee erbee. Nee eh fassaghey mee ayns pastyr glass; as my leeideil magh rish ny hushtaghyn --"

ANNE CALLOW: (Drawing her gently away) Hush thee, Nanny veen, for fear thou anger the gentleman.

OLD NAN: Lave me bee, Mistress Callow! (To Bishop) These wans is all kep' in at the teacher, but thou and me will go out to pick flowers.

ANNE CALLOW: Thee will be lenient to poor old Nan, Sir, for she's ill in her mind these days with the cold and hunger and the distress that's on us.

PETER COS: Aye, aye. Coul' and hungry she is, the sowl! Nights and days have we been on the coul' say, lashed with the waves and scourge with the storrums, and never no place would suffer us to bide, till they had to take us back to this dark dungeon which is a harbour of refuge to us now.

JANE HALL: (pointing to roof) Though the billows is thundering over our heads we have peace for all.

CALLOW: Though we be in this miserable state, persecuted and driven from our own homes along of thee, Isaac Barrow, thou sees we are not left to despair.

BISH OP: But these poor women, Master Callow! Surely it must wring your heart to see them suffering in this dreadful place. (Going up to the women and taking Mrs. Callow's hand) Tell me, Mistress, will you not persuade your husband to give up this strange obstinacy of his an return to the Church's fold?

ANNE CALLOW: What our men think is what we think, Sir, but thank thee all the same.

JANE HALL: We think and we say what the Spirit is putting in our hearts for to say, and to Him alone will we bow the knee though Kings and Earls should trample on us and all the high ones of the earth should cast us down.

CALLOW:(Lifting his hand for silence) I would not do thee injustice Isaac Barrow, but I fear it was by thy counsel that the Earl of Derby gave the order that we were to be carried off the Island.

PETER COS:(interrupting eagerly) The way we were buffeted from Ramsa to Whitehaven and from Whitehaven to Dublin and from there back to the Island to be three into this pit where the bodies of the dead lie over our heads.

JANE HALL: All on the big ocean in the couth of the winter, our bodies froze with the spray and the soul gone fainted within us!

BISHOP: It was by my counsel, William Callow, for I hoped that suffering would bring you back to your obedience, and also, as the Earl of Derby said, that this Island should not be infected by your pernicious doctrine. Never-the-less it was also by my counsel that you were set free the first time.

CALLOW: And of a surety we are grateful to thee that thou had it in thy heart to do us that kindness.

BISHOP: But now I am come to rebuke you for withdrawing your obedience from the Church, neglecting God's ordinances the Sacraments, without which there is no ordinary means of Salvation, and forsaking the public meeting of Christians to follow your own will-worship in unconsecrated places. Again I rebuke you for neglecting your estates and not providing for your families, which the Apostle tells us is worse than infidels.

PETER COS:(After a pause) Was it by order of thee, Sir, that the good corn of Ballafayle fields, that would have fed our families as well as Master Callow's in return for the labour we were putting out upon it, was took at the soldiers and poured out on Dhoolish Market Place and offered to any that would take it away?

JANE HALL: And not one of the poor people of the town would touch it, though they would have got it for the asking.

PETER COS: Hou! thee tongue, Jane Hall, and lave me to do the spaking. Sir, that corn was left untouched for a week, though there were many that were starving with hunger the way they are in them big towns where it's all streets and houses instead of green fields. But there was one poor fella, Sir, that was nigh desperate, and he took and said he would be thankful to get some of the corn that was going to loss on them. And they heised a sack on his shoulders, but

behoul' ye, not two steps did he go when a murrain fell upon him and he was took home in mortal sickness! Aye, yis, yis!

JANE HALL: That the Lord's people would be justified and their enemies overthrew.

BISHOP: Men and women, I see that neither rebukes nor clemency will move you. And yet because I am not a little troubled to see you run on in this wilful way to your own ruin, I would pray you once more to forsake this stubborn rebellion and give me your submission that I, as Bishop and Governor of this Island, may order you to be released from prison and restored to your homes.

CALLOW: Fain would we come into agreement with thee in these matters, but we cannot and we will not give thee submission, for we obey the Power that is higher than Kings and Earls; and if I were to suffer thoughts of home and ease to influence me in this way my conscience would arise and smite me for that I should be leading these persecute martyrs astray.

ALL: Aye, aye; thou're right, Master Callow.

BISHOP:(Angrily) You speak of Conscience. You would have the liberty of your Conscience, but you would not that I should have the liberty of my conscience! And my Conscience requires me now to deliver you over once more to be the Earl of Derby's prisoners till you shall come to your several senses.

(Exit Bishop)

JANE HALL: Be not cast down, Illiam Callow, for the Lord have spoken to me even while yandar proud priest was discoersin' thee, and lo and behoul' I am seein' thee back on thy own fields, aye, and us with thee that have come through the deep waters. For the Spirit have toul me this day that they shall presently cease from persecution and we will be delivered out of their hands.

MARY: Maybe Jane is right too. I wouldn't trust but them ones that have been chasin us so cruel will be getting tired and give over, the way we'll get rest at last.

CALLOW: We have been brought so far through many and great dangers and we can still hold up our heads and worship Him in our own way, though this dark cave be all the home we shall ever have in this world.

CURTAIN.

Scene 3.

At Ballafayle as before. William Callow seated at a table with ink-horn and quill and a large old Bible which he is unfolding

from its wrappings of discoloured sail-cloth. Mary Christen with bellows is trying to blow up the bones on the cold hearth. Anne Callow and others sitting quietly round. A few neighbours, sympathetic and curious, round door.

CALLOW: By the Lord's help we have gotten home to our own fireside.

PETER COS: We have so, thank God.

CALLOW: Night and day, winter and summer have we been driven hither and thither, our only resting places the cold wet stones of the dungeon or the cold slippery boards of the tossing ship, till the sailors themselves were showing pity on us and refusing to carry us.

PETER COS: Aye sure, wasn't it at Dhoolish itself they were putting us aboard a ship to carry us away from the Island, and behoul' ye, as we came up the side the men of the ship was lavin' her on the other side. Aw yis, yis!

CALLOW: And now we have given thanks in our silent hearts as we sat here this evening, brought home by the One that was with us.

JANE HALL: Time and agen, time and agen I was seeing Him, when we were lost and drowned on the big ocean - the Lord Himself.

ANNE CALLOW: Hush thee, Jane woman. I'm thinking the Master has something more to say to us.

JANE HALL:(Triumphantly) "And on the wings
Of mighty Kings
Came flying all abroad!"

CALLOW: Aye! Thou're right though, Jane, wily thou're right; and never will we of this little company of Friends part again, while we are here and left in peace; for bite and sup and decent lodging will my wife and me offer to each and all of you this night and for as long as we are in Ballafayle. You have lost your bits of things and we have lost and been despoiled in our estate, but welcome we give you to bide at Ballafayle for the sake of all the persecution we have come through together.

PETER COS: 'Deed Master, and the Mistress too, we do thank thee kindly, and we thank God that have put the good thought in thee heart.

ALL: We do, we do!

CALLOW: Well, well! Nor need Death itself part us, for all of you that will shall have the right to be laid to rest when your time come in the old Rhuillick up yander on the Cronk where me and mine will lie one day with the free wind of Heaven blowing over our heads, and the stars shining down upon us, and the Spirit of God passing by in the scent of the gorse and the sweet smell of the heather. In this Book which we have brought with us through our wanderings have I written it that the Rhuillick on my land where Manxmen worshipped on the mountain shall be an heritage and a resting-place for ever for "the people called Quakers".

CURTAIN.

FINIS.

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